

Self-Government.

Enthusiasm does for practical work what effervescence does for champagne. Effervescence gives life and spirit to wine, but it cannot make a bad wine good; nor if the vintage be of an inferior quality, or if, as is commonly the case, the liquor be wholly innocent of the juice of the grape, will any amount of brilliant sparkle and creamy foam impose on the educated palate. So enthusiasm gives life and spirit to work, but is impotent to effect accurate execution; nor can any amount of fervid intention recompense for the want of solid and patient labor. It is a good, a spur, an impulse as noble as any that can affect the human mind; the best of help, the most abiding encouragement to a well-trained and well-disciplined mind, but a delusion and a snare to all such as depend upon it alone. This is equally true as regards religious, professional or civil duty; but it is to civil or political duty that we purpose confining the application of the principle. For nearly a decade of years the inhabitants of the Mainland portion of the United Colony have been more or less earnestly agitating for the possession of those political rights which are regarded as the common and inalienable heritage of our countrymen—rights secured to us under the Magna Charta, sealed by the blood of our forefathers. In the Island part of the Colony political institutions imperfectly conferring these rights upon the people were enjoyed up to the period of Union, when the Island unthinkingly permitted itself to be deprived of the modicum of political liberty it enjoyed, and came under the less liberal system which obtained on the Mainland. Since the Union, which was consummated in the autumn of 1866, the United Colony has continued to be governed under a system which, while it professes to give the people some slight voice in the management of their affairs, is capable of being worked in such a way as to render the people absolutely powerless under a practical autocracy; and we need hardly say that it has for the most part been so worked. Few men placed in power will be more liberal than the constitutionists to say that they have uncomplainingly submitted to such a condition. During the whole period there has been one continuous murmur of dissatisfaction; but that dissatisfaction has too often taken the form of morbid discontent; and many have left the colony in order to escape from a hated system, instead of manfully attempting to change that system. There have not been wanting in the history of the colony exceptional instances, in which enthusiastic and demonstrative protestations gave promise of more decisive action; but, unfortunately, these efforts proved to be, for the most part, merely spasmodic—the brilliant sparkle and cream sent up by liquor which was wholly innocent of the true vintage. The result to the country has been very serious. Public affairs have been administered chiefly in the interest of the governing classes. A bloated Civil List was foisted upon the colony, utterly regardless of the needs of the country or the ability of the people to meet the exorbitant demand made upon them; and this regiment of officials, instead of applying themselves to the development of the immense resources of the colony and to the promotion of general prosperity, have been chiefly occupied in solving the interesting problem of how to draw the maximum of pay for the minimum of work. Thus, at a time when it could worst afford it, the revenues of the colony, the whole substance of the people, instead of being applied to the construction of reproductive works, and to the promotion of reproductive enterprises, have been drained in the breaches' pockets of an unproductive class. At length we have reached a most critical and important juncture in our colonial history. British Columbia, conformably to the desire of the great body of its people, is about to become a Province in the new Dominion; and thus a most fitting opportunity for having restored to us those powers of self-government of which we have for so many years been wrongfully deprived, presents itself. Will the people avail themselves of this opportunity? or are they content fecklessly and ignominiously to drift into the Dominion with their political shackles still rivetted on them? Rely upon it, political freedom will not be forced upon us unasked. It must be solicited, demanded! Leave it in the hands of the three Governments concerned? What did similar folly result in four years ago? To leave the terms of the new Constitution to the governing classes is to leave the management of the affairs of the colony still in their hands—to grant a fresh lease to autocratic tyranny and abuse. A policy of quiescence always comes to that. It lasts and looks pleasant until somebody twinks your nose, and then you have to hit out—rather harder than if you had not put on Quaker costume. Let the people be well assured of this, that unless they ask, and ask at once for self-government under Confederation, they are going to be put off without it. Nor must that asking be a mere effervescent bubbling up—a spasmodic hawl. In order to succeed, the demand for political manumission must be put forward with steadiness and reason—must be urged in a spirit of firmness and united determination. Shall we make the

trial? Or are the people content to be governed in the future from Ottawa, as they have been governed in the past, from Downing-street?

Lunacy at the Police Barracks.

EDITOR BRITISH COLONIST:—I am pleased to see you draw attention in this morning's COLONIST to the condition of the unfortunate ladies confined in the Police Barracks. Their position surely calls for action on the part of this community. It certainly is a disgrace to us that patients laboring under such a fearful malady should be confined in a place so unsuitable. I will not say that the people are to blame; but what are we to say about our model and paternal government in respect to this and other matters? It does seem as if their high mightiness had no other idea than provide for their own salaries. Some years ago the people of the city subscribed money and built a 'Female Hospital.' Why could not the building be used for cases like the present? Would it not be well to call together the subscribers and see what could be done to utilize this property? I am told that it is at present let and occupied as a dwelling house. Who receives the rent and what is done with the money? is the natural enquiry of

ONE OF THE SUBSCRIBERS.

[We made the distressing case at the Police Barracks the subject of personal enquiry yesterday, and it is due to the public as well as to the authorities more directly concerned that we should state the result. Unquestionably the Police Barracks is, in many respects ill suited for the reception and proper treatment of insane persons, more especially where, as in the present instance, the patients happen to be females; and without doubt the present melancholy case furnishes another argument in favor of a suitable establishment being provided wherein such unfortunate may be properly treated. It is no more than right, however, that we should mention the fact that the utmost solicitude has been evinced on the part of the authorities for the comfort of the unfortunate subjects of the above correspondence, and that they have succeeded in giving the place a wonderful air of comfort. In fact all that human effort can do under such circumstances is being done. A proposition made yesterday on behalf of St John's Church to have these patients taken to a private residence, was firmly declined by the third sister, who is in constant attendance, and who is decidedly of opinion that for the present such a change would be undesirable. We regret to say that no favorable symptoms have yet developed themselves.—Ed.]

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